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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

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STATES RELATIONS SERVICE
OFFICE OF EXTENSION WORK NORTH AND WEST
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THIS LOOKS GOOD

BARBED WIRE TELEPHONES.

There are still many rural homes that do not have telephones, and in times like the present when economy in all lines is so necessary, interest is reviving in the "barbed wire system" which was more or less common in parts of the West twenty years ago.

County Agent O.M. Osborn in Carson County, South Dakota, has assisted farmers in his county in installing such a system at an average cost of material per farmer of less than twenty dollars. Carson county is 87 miles long and very sparsely settled, although the agricultural lands are fenced. Standard telephone lines appear to be too expensive, yet there was a great need of facilitating communication. The county agent furnished information in regard to the cost of installing the line, using porcelain nail knobs for insulation, costing about five dollars per mile. These knobs work satisfactorily when the barbed wire is tied to the knobs with a short piece of wire.

In order to further reduce the cost of insulation, some farmers tried out pieces of rubber cut from automobile inner tubes. These pieces were one and one-half inches square, wound around the barbed wire and fastened to the nail post with staples. The county agent reports that this insulation is giving satisfaction, though of course the rubber will deteriorate sooner or later.

The farmers were able to secure second hand 'phones at from five to twenty dollars, and fifty cents for a lightning arrester, so that the total cost per farmer was comparatively nominal. Each farmer has his own special ring so there is at present no expense for a center. It is possible with such a system as this very cheaply to connect various parts of the farm or distant barns with the house, the tenant house with the farm home, etc. at a very low cost. While such a system leaves much to be desired in the way of service, it meets an emergency and can be made to answer, pending the coming of times when conditions will warrant a more expensive and more satisfactory system. In times like these it is worth while considering returning to the simple and inexpensive.

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